

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Official Action dated September 14, 1998, wherein the Examiner rejected all pending claims 1-31. Amendments have been made to the specification to address informalities of a clerical nature. Fig. 6 of the drawings is being amended to correct errors of a clerical nature. The proposed change is noted in red on a copy of the affected drawing sheet, as originally filed.

35 U.S.C. §112 objections

The Examiner has objected to claim 1-31 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner objects to claims 1, 2, 16 and 31, identifying fluid rising within the cup into the reservoir, apparently bypassing the bowl.

Whereas the claims as originally drafted identified the fluid overflowing from the fluid cup about said first annular space (the space within the process bowl between the fluid cup and the process bowl) into said fluid reservoir, the Applicants have amended the claims so as to more clearly identify the fluid flow from the fluid cup to the fluid reservoir as being via the process bowl.

35 U.S.C. §103 objections

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4 and 15-18, under 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schuster et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,000,827, in view of Kosaki, U.S. Patent No. 5,441,629. The Examiner further rejected claim 10, as being unpatentable over Schuster et al., '827, and Kosaki, '629, further in view of Sein et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,242,571, and rejected claims 11-14, as being unpatentable over Schuster et al., '827, and Kosaki, '629, further in view of Kulkarni et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,933,061. The Examiner additionally identifies claims 5, 7-9 and 19-30, as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants have amended claims 1 and 31, to further incorporate the feature of a leveler, and claims 2 and 16 have been amended to further incorporate the feature of a fluid filter. Correspondingly claims 5, 7, 17 and 19 have been canceled without prejudice. Claim 6 has similarly been canceled as not being directly related to the present invention. Claims 18 and 20 have been amended to address changes in dependency, as a result of the above noted

amendments. As presently amended claims 1, 2, 16 and 31 include subject matter the Examiner deemed allowable.

With respect to claim 15, the Examiner rejected the claim as being obviated by Schuster et al., '827, in view of Kasaki, '629, however the Applicants note Schuster et al., '827, and Kasaki, '629, fail to disclose or suggest an upper cup edge which is recessed below the upper bowl edge. One example where such a configuration is advantageous is in enabling a processing head to be lifted slightly so as to be clear of the process fluid and spun dry so as to spin off any excess fluids, wherein the fluid spun off is substantially retained within the process bowl.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the claimed workpiece processing station, as presently amended, is distinct and nonobvious in view of the cited references. The present amendment does not add any new matter to the application, and Applicants submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the present amendment and allowance of the claims are earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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